Remarks

Claims 1-14 were pending. Claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 7, and 13 are amended. Support for the amendments can be found in the specification, *inter alia*, at page 5, lines 3-35, and claim 2. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been added.

Based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and passage of the claims to allowance.

Telephone Interview

Applicant thanks the Examiner for conducting a constructive telephone interview on February 26, 2010. Although no agreement was reached, Applicant and the Examiner discussed differences between the Walance reference and the claimed invention.

§ 102 Rejections

Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Walance et al. (US 5,832,058). Applicant responds as follows.

Regarding claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Walance does not disclose a circuit that includes a bus and two primary branches, where a switch, in a first state, connects the primary branch with the bus and in a second, normal state, when the primary branch is not in use, connects the primary branch with ground for draining any unintended signal on the primary branch to prevent the unintended signals from coupling to the bus. As is described in Applicant's specification, parasitic capacitance can deteriorate the transmission quality of a line (see page 4, lines 6-11). Thus, a switch circuit connecting non-used primary branches with ground drains potential unintended signals, thereby improving the accuracy of test/monitoring measurements (see page 5, lines 3-27).

In contrast, Walance's test bus 12 (see Fig. 1) is not coupled to a primary branch that is switched to ground when not in use. Also, Walance's ports 41, 43 (see Fig. 6) are not buses.

Moreover, Applicant respectfully submits that Walance does not teach a circuit that includes the structure of at least two secondary branches, at least one of the secondary branches being provided with a second switch which, in a first state, connects the secondary branch with

the primary branch. Accordingly, as Walance does not disclose each feature of claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is not anticipated by Walance.

Regarding claim 7, Applicant respectfully submits that Walance does not disclose a method that includes the step of "connecting only that primary branch through which access to a telecommunication line is to be established with the bus while the others of the at least two primary branches remain connected to ground for draining any unintended signal on the primary branch to prevent the unintended signals from coupling to the bus."

Regarding claim 13, Applicant respectfully submits that Walance does not disclose a method that includes the step of connecting at least one circuit for providing test or monitoring access, where the circuit includes a bus and two primary branches, where a switch, in a first state, connects the primary branch with the bus and in a second, normal state, when the primary branch is not in use, connects the primary branch with ground for draining any unintended signal on the primary branch to prevent the unintended signals from coupling to the bus.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons above, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claims 1-14 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Walance et al. has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested. Please contact the undersigned should there be any questions or in order to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

March 10, 2010
Date

By: /Gregg H. Rosenblatt/
Gregg H. Rosenblatt, Reg. No.: 45,056
Telephone No.: (512) 984-7443

Office of Intellectual Property Counsel
3M Innovative Properties Company
Facsimile No.: 651-736-3833